



**REVIEW OF CHRISTOLOGY AND UNITY OF CHALCEDONIAN AND
NON-CHALCEDONIAN CHURCHES**

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ID.No:W/006/2016E.C

Introduction

Historically, Christology “the nature of Christ,” is the essential root of the Orthodox Church of Byzantian (Chalcedonian) and non-Chalcedonian. The official document by Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

St. George Coptic Orthodox Church Alexandria. The separation between the Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches, beginning after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., initiated a bitter and long period of schism. While today’s historical circumstances differ drastically from those of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, when Byzantine emperors frequently interfered in ecclesiastical affairs, recent decades have seen renewed efforts toward reconciliation from August 1964 to December 1985. The schism’s roots lay in both deep theological convictions concerning the nature of Christ and powerful historical and political pressures. This review paper examines the pivotal historical and theological circumstances surrounding the division, focusing on the concepts of *Mia-physis* and *Dyophysis* (two natures), Nestorianisms, Eutychanism, Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian discourse, St. Severus & St. Cyril, Tome of Leo, biblical background of miaphysis and our salvation, Christology in liturgies and hymns, modern effort of unity and highlights contemporary dialogue aimed at restoring the oneness of the Orthodox Church. The document prepared by Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

St. George Coptic Orthodox Church

Scholars ideas of council of 451

The 451 A.D. Council of Chalcedon Some scholars say there is no need for this council and the political principal roles of Emperor Marcion and his wife Pulcheria, supporters of Leo against Dioscorus, and even the effects of Nestorianism. Moreover, the German theologian Marcian said that the father of Chalcedon, agreed to draw up a new formula of belief.

The Historical and Theological of Separation

The Council of Chalcedon was heavily influenced by the interference of rulers, namely Emperor Marcian and Empress Pulcharia, who pressured the Fathers to draw up a new formula of belief. Furthermore, political actions by the Byzantine Empire, including military repression and the imposition of a Chalcedonian hierarchy, transformed the dispute in places like Egypt, Syria, and Armenia into a national resistance against Byzantine control. However, the core controversy remained theological, centered on Christology. The debate revolved around how to articulate the union of Christ's divinity and humanity while avoiding two specific heresies prevalent in the 5th century: Nestorianism and Eutychianism.

Nestorianism and the Alexandrian Response

Nestorianism adopted the phrase "in two natures" to assert two separate persons: Jesus (the man born of Mary) and the Son of God. This doctrine

denied that Mary was the *Theotokos* (Bearer of God). To counter this, St. Cyril of Alexandria, the defender of the Orthodox faith, insisted upon the expression “Miaphysis tou theou Logou Sesarkomene” *one enfleshed nature of God the word* or *One Nature of God the Logos Incarnate*. This phrase asserted a *hypostatic unity*, meaning the Incarnate Logos is known as the indivisible one, Emmanuel. In this unity, the properties of both divinity and humanity are present and active but without confusion or changing. St. Cyril exemplified this unity through analogies, such as the joining of soul and body in one human nature, or the unity of fire with iron.

Eutychianism and the Chalcedonian Response

Eutyches, in opposing Nestorianism, fell into the opposite error, denying that Christ’s manhood was consubstantial with ours. He believed that the divine nature absorbed the human nature, resulting in only one nature *after* the union. The Non-Chalcedonian Churches universally reject this Eutychian heresy. The Chalcedonian Churches, in turn, looked to the Council of Chalcedon as a defense against Eutychianism, accepting the formulation of Christ “in two natures” (*Dyophysis*) to safeguard the reality of His manhood. However, Non-Chalcedonians rejected the Council primarily because it accepted the controversial Tome of Leo. Leo’s Tome was criticized for using the term “*Dyophysis* ” (in two natures) and for seemingly attributing particular acts of Christ separately to different natures, which critics feared promoted a semi-Nestorian view or a duality of subjects. St. Dioscorus of Alexandria, a strong opponent of Eutychianism, was condemned at

Chalcedon, not for heresy, but because he refused to communicate with Leo of Rome and failed to attend the meetings.

Clarifying Terminology of Monophysism and Mia-physis

The Non-Chalcedonians reject the label “Monophysites,” arguing it draws them too close to the Eutychian heresy. They clarify that *Mia-physis* uses “*Mia*” (*one united nature*), referring to a composite nature, rather than “*Monos*” (*simple one*), which suggests the exclusion of one nature. Non-Chalcedonians affirm that Jesus Christ is truly the Incarnate Son of God, who took a real and perfect manhood, and the union did not involve confusion or loss of properties. This united nature is necessary for salvation, ensuring that the sacrifice on the Cross attributed to the Incarnate Son of God has the power to forgive unlimited sins. Coptic liturgies and hymns consistently reflect this Christology, stating Christ's divinity and humanity were united “without mingling, nor confusion, nor alteration”.

Efforts for Unity and Reconciliation

Motivated by the desire for unity, the two families of Orthodox Churches have engaged in dialogue since the mid-20th century. After 15 centuries of separation, four unofficial consultations (Aarhus 1964, Bristol 1967, Geneva 1970, and Addis Ababa 1971) were held. A pivotal declaration came from the Aarhus Consultation (1964), where theologians stated: “On the essence of the Christological dogma we found ourselves in full agreement”. Despite historical differences in terminology, both sides affirm the unity of Godhead

and manhood without division/separation (Chalcedonian view) and without confusion/change (Non-Chalcedonian view). The path toward a common faith is found in the Cyrillian statement, *Mia-physis tou Theou Logou\ sesarkomene*. Through dialogue, theologians agree that Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, has two natures united in the one hypostasis of the Divine Logos, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.

Conclusion

The schism following Chalcedon was a complex interplay of political maneuvering, differing interpretations of Alexandrian theology, and the challenge of defining Christ's nature against prevailing heresies. While the historical conflict centered on whether to emphasize *Dyophysis* (two natures) against Eutychianism, or *Mia-physis* (one united nature) against Nestorianism, contemporary theological dialogue has revealed a fundamental shared faith. The renewed commitment to unity, evidenced by the official Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue (Chambesy 1985) and the adoption of the Cyrillian formula as common ground, suggests that the two families are overcoming past terminological misunderstandings to recognize their shared orthodox confession of Jesus Christ: *perfect in His Godhead and perfect in His humanity, united in one hypostasis*. This process of theological understanding operates like archaeologists carefully cleaning centuries of accumulated dust and debris from a shared foundational

inscription, revealing the singular, clear truth hidden beneath layers of political conflict and linguistic dispute.